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ABSTRACT

The Scholarship Program in New York City was created to provide full tuition reimbursement to people pursuing study toward the New York State Certification in various shortage areas in exchange for employment within the New York City Board of Education. Participants had to have been continuously enrolled in an academic program, and to have agreed to take at least 12 credits per school year. Questionnaires completed by 208 participants (41 percent response rate) indicate that most respondents were women of various ethnic backgrounds, pursuing bilingual scholarships. Most were already employed by the Board of Education, but many were interested in obtaining a new position within the system. Evaluators conclude that recruiting techniques targeting minority women are successful and that the training provided is useful, although some courses are more helpful than others depending on the position for which participants were trained. Recommendations are made for program continuation and improvement, with attention to providing more information about contracts and service requirements at the outset of the program. Four tables present study data. An appendix lists universities and colleges participating in the program. (SLD)

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ED 378 266

OER Report

FOLLOW-UP EVALUATION OF THE 1992-1993 SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

APRIL 1994

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FOLLOW-UP EVALUATION OF THE 1992-1993 SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

APRIL 1994

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Scholarship Program was created to provide full tuition reimbursement to people pursuing study towards New York State Certification in various shortage areas in exchange for employment within the New York City Board of Education. Participants had to have been continuously enrolled in an academic program, and agree to take a minimum of twelve credits per school year.

Evaluators from the Office of Educational Research (O.E.R.) distributed a total of 523 questionnaires to participants in order to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the Scholarship Program. A total of 208 questionnaires were completed and returned, resulting in a 41 percent response rate.

Findings indicate that most participants were women of different ethnic backgrounds, pursuing bilingual scholarships. Most were enrolled in the Scholarship Program at the time of this research, and were already employed by the New York City Board of Education. However, many participants demonstrated an interest in obtaining a new position within the Board of Education when they have completed the program.

Based on these findings, O.E.R. evaluators concluded that recruiting techniques targeting minority women were successful, and the training provided in the program quite useful, although some courses were more helpful than others, depending on the position for which participants were trained. Recommendations are made to continue the program, with attention toward providing more detailed information about contracts and service requirements at the outset of the program.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This report was prepared by the Research Unit of the Office of Educational Research (O.E.R./R.U.) under the supervision of Ms. Mabel Payne. Ira Brandenberg developed the research instrument, Sangeetha Purushothaman supervised the distribution and collection of participant questionnaires. Adeola Joda, Vadim Markhasin and Juilet Whittle were responsible for coding the data. Jan Rosenblum performed statistical analyses, Dr. Lynne Manzo analyzed data and wrote the report, while Carol Meyer served as senior editor.

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INTRODUCTION

Program Background

The Scholarship Program was created by the Office of Recruitment, Placement, Assessment and Licensing's (ORPAL) Bureau of Recruitment Programs to provide full tuition reimbursement to people pursuing graduate study towards New York State Certification in various monolingual and bilingual shortage areas. Bilingual scholarships are available for:

Education Evaluation
Guidance and Counseling
Occupational Therapy*
Physical Therapy*
School Psychology
Speech and Hearing Handicapped*
School Social Work
Special Education.

Monolingual scholarships are available for the latter two areas only.

To be eligible to participate in the Scholarship Program, candidates must be accepted as a degree student by a participating college/university in a program approved by the New York State Education Department**. Candidates must also be permanent residents or citizens of the United States. Further, bilingual applicants must demonstrate proficiency in a language other than English.

Tuition assistance is awarded to program participants on a semester basis and is renewable as funding permits. Awards cover

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*Monolingual scholarships are also available in these disciplines.

**Thirty-one colleges and universities participated in this Scholarship Program; they are listed in Appendix A.

the full cost of tuition for those courses which directly lead to certification in the shortage areas described above. Participants must be continuously enrolled in the academic program and agree to take a minimum of twelve credits per school year. In exchange for tuition assistance, each participant must also sign a contract indicating that she/he will provide a required number of years of service in a special education setting within the New York City Public School system once they have obtained their certificate. A minimum of one school year of service is required for each twelve credits that participants take. Those with more than twelve credits are required to give two years of service for each year they were enrolled in the program. Hard-to-staff districts and license areas will be given priority during placement.

Evaluation Methodology

During the 1992-93 school year, evaluators from the Office of Educational Research (O.E.R.) met with representatives from the Office of Recruitment, Placement, Assessment and Licensing (ORPAL) to develop an evaluation plan for ORPAL's Scholarship Program. As a result of this meeting, O.E.R. evaluators developed a Participant Questionnaire which addressed the following topic areas: (1) recruitment and training; (2) program assessment; and (3) job searches/opportunities.

In assessing the Scholarship Program itself, participants were asked for their views of the faculty's ability to provide advisement, training, and course work. Participants also rated

the tuition payment system, service obligation requirement, and default system used in the Scholarship Program.

In the spring of 1993, this questionnaire was distributed to a total of 523 current program participants and graduates. Twenty were returned to the sender as undeliverable, and 208 were returned completed, resulting in a response rate of 41 percent.

The Scope of the Report

The next section presents evaluators' findings regarding program implementation, including participant characteristics, a description of the recruitment and training process, and participants' assessment of the Scholarship Program. This is followed by O.E.R.'s conclusions and recommendations, presented on page 11.

PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

Participant Characteristics

Table 1 (below) illustrates the demographic characteristics of program participants.

TABLE 1

PARTICIPANT CHARACTERISTICS

ITEM	RESPONDENTS N	%
Gender		
Female	150	72
Male	45	22
No Response	13	6
Age		
20-30	51	24
31-40	78	38
41-50	65	31
50+	12	6
No Response	2	1
Race/Ethnicity[a]		
White	46	22
Latino	82	39
African-American	34	16
Asian	15	7
No Response	29	14
Languages Spoken[b]		
English	150	72
Haitian-Creole	27	13
French	26	13
Spanish	123	59
Chinese	13	6
Other	34	16

[a] Two participants' responses to this question were unreadable.

[b] Since these categories are not mutually exclusive (i.e., many respondents spoke more than one language), the number of responses exceeds 100 percent.

- The majority of participants were bilingual women of various ethnic backgrounds.

The fact that many participants spoke several languages is reflected in the fact that most (153 or 75 percent) had a bilingual scholarship, while 25 percent (51) had a monolingual scholarship.

Participant Recruitment and Training

Participants learned about the Scholarship Program from many different sources.

TABLE 2

HOW PARTICIPANTS LEARNED ABOUT PROGRAM

SOURCE	RESPONDENTS N	%
Scholarship Program coordinator	131	63*
Teacher/Board of Education employee	83	40
BOE brochures or circulars	71	34
Office of Recruitment	64	31
Non-BOE advertisements	48	23
Professor/advisor	24	12
Non-BOE friend	16	8

* Since these categories are not mutually exclusive, (i.e., participants learned about the program from more than one source), responses exceed 100 percent.

- Most participants learned about the program through the Scholarship Program Coordinator or another Board of Education employee.

While most participants (90 percent) felt that the people who recruited them were helpful, some (ten percent) did not. Those who did not find them helpful cited confusion about application deadlines and failure to ask pertinent questions as the source of the problem.

When asked why they decided to join the program, many participants (52 percent) explained that they wanted to further

their education and obtain a higher degree in one the fields offered by the Scholarship Program. These participants joined the program for self-advancement and professional growth. Financial consideration was also a popular reason (24 percent) for joining the program; the offer of free tuition was a substantial draw. Other reasons for joining the program included helping bilingual and language minority students (13 percent), and obtaining a job in the New York City Board of Education (5 percent).* Participants' feelings about the importance of the scholarship program was also evident in the fact that 76 percent felt that the program had a "major" influence in their decision to continue their education, giving the program a rating of "4" or "5" on a scale of one to five.**

Table 3 indicates the various colleges and universities which participants attended. Participants pursued various fields of studied offered through the Scholarship Program: guidance and counseling (26 percent); school psychology (23 percent); speech and hearing handicapped (22 percent); special education (15 percent); school social work (8 percent); educational evaluation (3 percent); and occupational therapy (1 percent)***.

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*An additional six percent did not explain why they joined the Scholarship Program.

**Nine percent felt that the program had an average ("3") influence on their decision to continue their education, while two percent felt it had "little influence" ("2") and seven percent felt the program had "no influence" on their decision ("1"). Six percent did not respond to this item.

***An additional 2% did not specify in which program there were enrolled.

TABLE 3

WHERE PARTICIPANTS ATTENDED COLLEGE

COLLEGES/UNIVERSITIES	RESPONDENTS N	%
New York University	47	23
Long Island University	42	20
City University of New York	35	17
St. John's University	22	10
Fordham University	18	9
Adelphi University	16	8
Columbia University	9	4
College of New Rochelle	6	3
Mercy College	4	2
Pace University	3	1
Other*	6	3
TOTAL	208	100

* The colleges included in this category are Kean College (2 participants), Bank Street College (2), Hofstra University (1), and Yeshiva University (1).

- Participants attended a variety of colleges and universities throughout the New York City metropolitan area.

The vast majority of participants were pursuing graduate study (96 percent); only two percent were pursuing undergraduate study.*

Participants' Assessment of the Program

Tables 4 and 5 (see next page) depict participants' views of both the Scholarship Program and the faculty. Participants rated both quite highly. However, ratings of the service obligation component of the program were somewhat less favorable. When asked how they felt about being obliged to accept a position

*Two percent of participants also did not specify whether they were pursuing undergraduate or graduate degrees.

TABLE 4

PARTICIPANTS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

Item	No Experience		Poor < 1		2		3		4		> Excellent 5		Mean Rating	No Reply	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%		N	%
Application process	3	1	5	2	13	6	53	26	64	31	60	29	3.8	10	5
Tuition payment system	4	2	16	8	32	15	33	16	51	24	62	30	3.6	10	5
Default policy	39	19	5	2	11	5	49	24	43	21	21	10	3.5	40	19
Deferment of service policy	37	18	4	2	11	5	45	22	45	22	25	12	3.6	40	19
Overall Administration of the Program	4	2	3	1	7	3	37	18	75	36	75	36	4.1	7	3

• More than half of respondents gave faculty a rating of "4" or "5" (on a scale of one to five) on all aspects.

TABLE 5

PARTICIPANTS' VIEWS OF FACULTY

Item	Poor < 1		2		3		4		> Excellent 5		Mean Rating	No Reply	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%		N	%
Providing advisement	18	9	20	10	41	20	63	30	61	29	3.6	5	2
Providing academic training	6	3	14	7	41	20	72	34	58	28	3.9	17	8
Scheduling classes	10	5	14	7	43	21	65	31	57	27	3.7	19	9
Course work	2	1	15	7	42	20	87	42	55	26	3.9	7	3

• Overall, most participants rated program faculty highly, particularly in terms of providing academic training and course work.

wherever it is offered, 44 percent of participants gave it a rating of "1" or "2" on a scale of one ("unfair") to five ("very fair"). Thirty-one percent gave it an average rating ("3"), and 25 percent rated it a "4" or a "5." The mean rating for this item was 2.6. Many participants (48 percent) explained that they felt they should be allowed to find teaching positions themselves, while another 35 percent argued that students should be placed close to their place of residence or within an easy commuting distance.

However, participants considered the service obligation requirement in exchange for tuition assistance more fair. In this case, 44 percent rated this aspect as "fair" ("4") or "very fair" ("5"), while 31 percent gave it an average rating ("3") and only 25 percent felt it was unfair, rating it a "1"or "2" on a scale of one to five, where 1=unfair and 5=very fair. The mean rating for this aspect of the program is 3.3. Of those who offered suggestions for improving the service obligation system, 63 percent suggested requiring one year of service for every year of tuition. Others (11 percent) argued that consideration should be given to those who already work in the New York City Public School system, i.e., teachers should be credited for service.

Participants' Current Employment Status

Most participants (64 percent) had not completed the Scholarship Program at the time of this evaluation, while 33 percent had. In addition, most participants (69 percent) were working in the New York City Public Schools, regardless of

whether or not they had completed the program. More specifically, 47 of the 69 participants who have completed the program had positions in the New York City Public Schools.* Even among those who were still enrolled in the program (132), 86 (or 65 percent) worked in the public school system.** However, it should be noted that 25 percent were not working in the public school system.

Those working in the New York City Public Schools (144 or 69 percent) held the following non-shortage positions: General Education Teacher (31 percent); Bilingual Teacher/Special Education Teacher (18 percent); Special Education Teacher (16 percent); Guidance Counselor/Bilingual Guidance Counselor (13 percent); Social Worker/Bilingual Social Worker (seven percent); Education Evaluator (five percent); School Psychologist (three percent); Payroll Secretary/Paraprofessional (three percent); and Other (three percent).

The length of time during which participants had worked for the New York City Public Schools varied widely. Of those who specified the length of time they had worked (N=138), 28 percent had been in their current job for a maximum of one year, 27 percent had been in their job between one and three years, 19 percent between three and five years, 15 percent between five and

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*An additional nine percent of those who had completed the program did not specify whether they were working in the New York City Public Schools.

**An additional fifteen participants did not respond to this question.

ten years, and 8 percent for ten or more years.

When asked which courses were the most useful in their current job, participants' opinions also varied. While 41 percent of participants considered all of their courses useful, most specified certain courses or kinds of courses which they felt were the most useful to them, depending on the position for which they were training. Only two of 208 people felt that no courses were useful for their current job.

Some participants (22 percent) suggested ways to make the Scholarship Program more useful to them in their current work. These included having more courses in a specific ares (e.g., more counseling courses), providing field work or internships, and increasing interaction between colleges and the Scholarship Program.

Finally, most participants (61 percent) expected to be re-hired in their current position next year. Nine percent felt they would not be-rehired. The latter group expected to have new positions as a result of their training.*

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*Thirty percent of participants did not respond to this question.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

The fact that most of the participants of the Scholarship Program were women of various ethnic backgrounds who spoke different languages suggests that recruiting techniques targeting minority women were successful.

Findings that most participants had not yet completed the Scholarship Program at the time of this research, and that most already had non-shortage area positions in the Board of Education is congruent with the fact that most participants were still interested in obtaining a new position. This is why they had enrolled in the Scholarship Program.

Findings also indicated that different participants had different views of what aspects of the program were the most and least useful to them in their current position. For example, while some felt that the counseling courses were the most useful, others considered them the least useful. It is likely that participants' views of the utility of courses depended on what particular program they were pursuing. It should also be noted that since some participants had not completed the Scholarship Program, they would be looking for a new position upon completion of the program. Consequently, the fact that some courses were not useful for the participants' current position does not necessarily pose a problem.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this evaluation, it is clear that the Scholarship Program is a useful one which provides opportunities for individuals to pursue professional training and receive tuition assistance in exchange for work in a shortage area in the New York City Public Schools. In this way, participants are advancing themselves professionally, while the Board of Education can fill positions in those areas most in need of staffing. Therefore, O.E.R. evaluators recommend that this program continue.

However, based on participant feedback, it is recommended that more practicums, field work, and hands-on experiences within the public schools be incorporated in the training, and that there be more flexible scheduling of classes (evening or summer courses) in view of the fact that many participants work full-time.

Findings indicate that the service obligation requirement component of the program should be more carefully considered. Efforts should be made to places program participants in positions nearer to their district, or within reasonable commuting distance. Consideration should also be given to the possibility that participants be allowed to have a choice in where they are placed.

Finally, some consideration should be given to participants' suggestions to improve the overall administration of the program by providing more détailed information regarding contracts and requirements at the outset of the program.

APPENDIX A

Universities/Colleges which Participated in the Scholarship Program

Adelphi University (Garden City)
Adelphi University (Manhattan)
Alfred University
Bank Street College
CUNY - Baruch College
CUNY - Brooklyn College
CUNY - City College
CUNY - College of Staten Island
CUNY - Hunter College
CUNY - Lehman College
CUNY - Medgar Evers
CUNY - Queens College
CUNY - Geneseo
College of Mount St. Vincent
College of New Rochelle
Columbia University - Teachers College
Fordham University
Hofstra University
Kean College of New Jersey
LIU - Brooklyn
LIU - C.W. Post
LIU - Westchester
Manhattan College
Mercy College
New York University
Pace University
Rochester Institute of Technology
St John's University
SUNY - Cortland
Wagner College
Yeshiva University